Punjab heightens security of courts, judges and bars

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab police have been put on high alert with instructions to heighten arrangements for the security of judges, courts and bars across the province.

The new security advisory was issued by the Central Police Office (CPO) here on Tuesday in the wake of the suicide attack in Islamabad, claiming lives of 12 persons and leaving many others injured.

The CPO directed the Lahore capital city police officer (CCPO), the regional police officers (RPOs), district police officers (DPOs) and others that it was imperative to review and strengthen the security apparatus already in place for the protection of judicial complexes, courtrooms, bars, judges' residences and movement.

The DPOs have been asked to hold meetings with the respective district and sessions judges forthwith to discuss the overall security scenario on the court premises, judges' personal security, particularly during their movement.

The CPO directed them to deploy adequate and well-trained security personnel and install modern equipment at all judicial establishments and bars, besides launching search and sweep operations on the judges' routes to ensure their hazard-free travel.

The CPO also issued guidelines for entry and exit points of all the courts and entrance of the courtrooms.

The police officers were instructed to ensure daily and weekly inspections of the security arrangements.

They were directed to deploy a uniformed officer in every courtroom during the proceedings.

The courts should have both intrusion and duress alarms to generate an alert in case of an unauthorised entry.

The CPO also issued a "weapon policy", saying that arms should only be carried by the law enforcement officials on the court premises.

The police officers were instructed to establish command and control centres on the court premises in every district.

FIA nabs woman for visa fraud

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Tuesday arrested a woman allegedly involved in a visa fraud.

The FIA arrested Safeena Nisar during a raid in Lahore.

"The suspect, in collusion with her husband Mian Nisar, defrauded a citizen of Rs4.5 million by promising him employment in Canada. Fake stamps, citizens' identity cards, and other forged documents were recovered from her possession," it said and added the suspect failed to send the victim abroad as promised.

Raids are being conducted to apprehend her husband.

Meanwhile, the FIA Commercial Banking Circle Lahore convicted three suspects in a bank fraud case.

The court sentenced Waqas Yasin and Mudassir Ghafoor to seven years of rigorous imprisonment each, while Madiha Ghafoor was awarded 16-year jail term.

In total, the convicts received 23 years of imprisonment in the banking fraud case, the FIA said.

LAHORE: A farmer prepares his field for sowing wheat. — White Star / M. Arif

'Fallout of crackdown on power theft'

Two Lesco men injured, vehicles damaged in attack on office

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) airport subdivision team was allegedly attacked by some armed men on Tuesday, during a crackdown on power theft in Gohawa Tibba locality, who injured two officials and damaged the company's vehicles.

According to officials, a Lesco team, along with Pakistan Rangers and police personnel, reached the Gohawa Tibba locality within airport division's jurisdiction and launched a crackdown on massive power theft there. The team removed several meters, transformers etc on account of power theft by the locals, they say.

The officials say that a couple of hours after the crackdown, around seven armed power thieves, led by one Mian Babar, arrived at the Lesco office and started thrashing two linemen — Farooq and Irfan -- who were left badly injured in the attack.

The attackers also damaged the Lesco vehicles and other articles before fleeing.

The RA Bazaar police have registered a case against the suspects.

SEALED: The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) teams have sealed over 80 properties on account of non-payment of commercialisation fee and illegal land use.

The properties were sealed in various localities within the LDA control areas, according to a spokesman.

DESIGNATION: Under the amended Horticulture Authority Act-2025, the Punjab government has changed the designation of directors general of the Parks and Horticulture Authorities (PHAs) to managing directors (MDs).

The decision, according to a spokesman, aims to ensure institutional improvement, better service delivery, transparency and effective implementation of law.

He says that a new administrative structure has also been developed for the PHAs' beautification and renovation mechanisms, to improve maintenance of the public parks, greenbelts, roads and boulevards across the province.

He hopes that the assignment of new designations will promote transparency in administrative affairs, expedite decision-making and enhance standards of public facilities.

The spokesman says that the PHAs' officers and staff have been directed to focus on the beautification of urban environments, restoration of parks, and renovation of highways.

He says that the establishment of 'Horticulture Agencies' will further strengthen planning and operational mechanisms of the PHAs' to ensure that every project meets modern urban development standards.

He adds that new benchmarks for public convenience and urban aesthetics are also being set across the province. To achieve these goals, the newly-appointed MDs have been tasked with promoting modern urban planning and sustainable development.

Smog returns to Lahore after a week-long respite

By Imran Gabol

LAHORE: After a week-long respite, Lahore on Tuesday got a familiar yet alarming sight of smog enveloping it which reduced visibility and posed a severe health risks to millions of its residents.

According to the data from the IQAir, an air quality monitoring platform, Lahore's Air Quality Index (AQI) soared to a staggering 'hazardous' level of 567 in the early hours of the day, once again ranking it as one of the most polluted cities in the world.

The AQI of other stations in Lahore at 8pm was CERP Office 435, Forest Department, Ravi Road, 428, Powerzone head office 377, Model Town 358, Syed Maratib Ali Road 336, Fauji Fertilizer Pakistan 332 and AC Office Shalimar Complex Wagah 296.

Smog, a noxious mix of vehicle emissions, industrial pollutants and seasonal crop burning, has cast a pall over the city, turning the morning sun into a faint, orange disc.

Health officials have issued advisories, urging the citizens, especially children, the elderly, and those with respiratory conditions, to remain indoors and wear high-grade N95 or KN95 masks if venturing outside is unavoidable.

Earlier, Punjab Police continued operations to control air pollution. As a part of the anti-smog campaign during the last 24 hours, 26 cases were registered and lawbreakers were arrested in various districts, including Lahore.

A police spokesperson said that during the operations, fines amounting to more than Rs1,055,000 were imposed on 464 individuals while warnings were issued to 87 others. Violations included 52 cases of crop residue burning, 145 cases of smoke-emitting vehicles, five cases of industrial activities and 12 violations by brick kilns.

Meanwhile, IQAir reported that air quality in Pakistan remained very poor, with major cities experiencing unhealthy to hazardous levels and dangerously high PM2.5 concentrations, posing serious health risks to residents, especially children and the elderly.

Several urban centres on Tuesday morning recorded AQI readings above 300, prompting health warnings. Residents are advised to limit outdoor activities, keep windows closed, wear masks when outside and use air purifiers indoors.

While conditions remain poor, Pakistan's average PM2.5 concentration in 2024 was 73.7 µg/m3, equivalent to an AQI of 160, classified as 'unhealthy'. This level is nearly 15 times higher than the WHO annual guideline of 5 µg/m3, making Pakistan the world's third most polluted country in 2024.

As of Nov 11, the cities in Pakistan affected by poor air quality include Abbottabad, Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, Hyderabad, Gujranwala, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar, Quetta, Rawalpindi and Sukkur.

Notices on SIC chief's plea for halting NA-104 by-election

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Tuesday issued notices to the federal government, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and other respondents on a petition for halting the by-poll in the National Assembly constituency vacated after the disqualification of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief Sahibzada Hamid Raza.

Justice Khalid Ishaq heard the petition filed by Mr Raza, challenging the by-election schedule for NA-104, Faisalabad.

The petitioner's counsel, Bassam Ahmad Siddiqui, stated that Sahibzada Raza had been elected from NA-104 in the 2024 general election. He said the petitioner was disqualified following his conviction in a case related to May 9 riots.

He argued that the ECP directly notified the disqualification of the petitioner without a reference sent by the National Assembly speaker, as required by law.

The counsel contended that the disqualification was made without fulfilling legal requirements and despite this, the ECP issued a schedule for the by-election, with polling set to be held on Nov 23.

The lawyer asked the court to declare the by-election schedule null and void.

The judge sought replies from the respondents within a week.

Last week, Islamabad police had arrested Raza and presented him before a Faisalabad anti-terrorism court, which sent him to jail to serve his 10-year jail term in the May 9 case.

The SIC chief was convicted in the case, along with several PTI leaders, on July 31. — **Staff Reporter**

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